



The Wisdom of James: Parallels with Mahayana Buddhism

John P. Keenan

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In this fascinating book John Keenan offers a classical commentary on the New Testament Letter of James, section by section, informed by a thorough study of contemporary Jamesian scholarship. His approach is unique in that it employs Mahayana Buddhist philosophy as the interpretive lens to focus on this early Christian text.

The author argues that the first chapter of James' letter presents wisdom as non-discriminative, in a manner very similar to Mahayana Buddhist teaching on wisdom. And James' insistence upon deeds of compassion and justice recommends a notion of Christian practice that is quite close to the Mahayana ideal of Bodhisattva engagement in the world. Because of these areas of resonance, James is particularly amenable to a Mahayana reading--a reading that enables us to elicit fresh insights from the text.

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